

Message Text

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BEGIN SUMMARY: EMBASSY BONN AGREES THAT PUBLIC OPINION

IN THE FRG IS FIRMLY BEHIND THE CONCEPT OF WESTERN COLLECTIVE SECURITY AND THE BELIEF THAT NATO IS THE BEST MEANS TO ACHIEVE THAT SECURITY (REFTEL). WHILE PUBLIC OPINION MAY HAVE WAVERED SOMEWHAT IN VARIOUS NATO COUNTRIES DURING THE EARLY 1970'S, THIS WAS NOT THE CASE IN THE FRG. THE BERLIN WALL AND THE PRESENCE OF SOVIET DIVISIONS IN EAST GERMANY HAS KEPT PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR NATO AND COLLECTIVE DEFENSES AT A REMARKABLY EVEN--AND HIGH--LEVEL. END SUMMARY

1. THEFRG, UNDER BOTH CONSERVATIVE (CDU/CSU) AND SOCIALIST (SPD) GOVERNMENTS, HAS BEEN A STRONG SUPPORTER OF NATO. THIS SUPPORT IS FIRMLY BASED ON GERMAN PUBLIC OPINION. WHILE THE EMBASSY CAN FIND NO POLLS DONE BY THE SAME POLLING ORGANIZATIONS ASKING THE SAME QUESTIONS OVER A PERIOD OF YEARS, INDIVIDUAL POLLS BEAR THIS OUT. THEY ALSO SHOW THAT THERE WAS NO WAVERING IN THAT SUPPORT DURING THE EARLY 1970'S, A WAVERING WHICH NEEDED THE REINFORCEMENT OF A NATO SUMMIT. FOR EXAMPLE, IN APRIL OF 1973 A MARPLAN PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY DONE ON BEHALF OF THE USIA SHOWED THAT 72.8 PERCENT OF THE GERMANS POLLED CONSIDERED THAT "NATO IS STILL ESSENTIAL TO WEST EUROPEAN SECURITY." NO MORE RECENT POLL ON THIS SUBJECT IS AVAILABLE, BUT THESE STRIKING FIGURES INDICATE THAT THE GERMAN POPULATION DID NOT JOIN THE PEOPLES OF OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES IN "FEELING AT LOOSE ENDS" DURING THE EARLY 1970'S.

2. POLLING FIGURES CONCERNING THE DESIRABILITY OF MAINTAINING U.S. TROOP LEVELS IN EUROPE ARE ONE INDICATION OF GERMAN COMMITMENT TO WESTERN COLLECTIVE SECURITY. IN THE MARPLAN SURVEY OF APRIL 1973, 63.2 PERCENT OF THE GERMANS POLLED FELT THAT THE NUMBER OF AMERICAN TROOPS STATIONED IN THE FRG SHOULD EITHER REMAIN THE SAME OR BE INCREASED. IN A POLL TAKEN IN MAY OF 1975 BY EMNID, 67 PERCENT OF THOSE QUESTIONED WERE AGAINST A PARTIAL OR COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL OF AMERICAN TROOPS FROM THE FRG. IT IS REMARKABLE THAT MORE THAN THIRTY YEARS AFTER THE ARRIVAL OF AMERICAN TROOPS IN GERMANY, SOME TWO-THIRDS OF ALL GERMANS WANT THEM TO REMAIN

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DESPITE THE INEVITABLE IRRITATIONS CAUSED BY THE PRESENCE OF A BODY OF FOREIGN SOLDIERS AND AIRMEN.

3. CONCLUSION: THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY IS SUI GENERIS IN NATO. THE INHABITANTS OF THIS DIVIDED COUNTRY ARE OBVIOUSLY LESS VOLATILE IN THEIR VIEWS ON COLLECTIVE DEFENSE AND NATO THAN THEIR FELLOW MEMBERS OF THE ALLIANCE. AFTER ALL, THEY ONLY HAVE TO LOOK

ACROSS THE BERLIN WALL OR THE MINE FIELDS ALONG THE
EAST GERMAN BORDER TO SEE WHAT NATO IS ALL ABOUT.

HILLENBRAND

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